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30 July 1973

Ground Rules on Closest Point of Approach, Gulf of Tonkin Reconnaissance

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1. Per telecon, [REDACTED], DIA, indicates that the governing document specifying all sensitive operations around the world is the Peacetime Reconnaissance and Sensitive Operations Directive (PRSOD). This document defines the points of closest approach for all sensitive operational areas. With respect to the Gulf of Tonkin, he reaffirmed that a 12 mile limit applies and that it includes islands as points of departure. He said he thought this was based on the North Vietnamese claim concerning territorial limits which is valid, or honored in practice, because we have not disputed it. He noted, for example, that the Libya claim is 50 miles but the U.S. does not honor that. He also indicated that at the present time the operational requirement for SR-71 (GIANT SCALE) photographic operations in the Gulf is against the requirement for effective weekly coverage. The coincidence of the SR-71 and SCOPE SHIELD flights on 21 July, he said, was simply because of the break in the weather.

2. DIA is preparing a comparative evaluation of the GIANT SCALE and SCOPE SHIELD materials for the missions of July 21st.

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DIA review(s) completed.

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